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THE ROAD AHEAD

Geist on track again, aiming for London



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File: Kim Geist of Emmaus rides in a qualifying 2 kilometer time trial during the Valley Sports and Arthritis Surgeons' Firecraker 100-Professional race at the Lehigh Valley Velodrome in Trexlertown, Friday night, July 1, 2005. (Ed Landrock, TMC / July 6, 2011)

%Gary Blockus%

9:21 P.M. EDT, JULY 6, 2011

Kim Geist's Olympic dreams were in her heart and mind in August 2007. She was on the cusp of qualifying for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Cycling Team and out on a familiar training ride, pedaling along Route 100 in Macungie, dreaming the dream that had fueled so many training rides before, so many hours in the gym, so many carefully measured and proportioned calories.

That dream was shattered, not by a competing rider, but by the driver of an 18-wheel tractor trailer that nearly crushed Geist to death when it ran over her.



"I had six broken ribs, a fractured vertebrae, fractured sacrum, fractured pelvis and partially collapsed both of my lungs," the now 24-year-old Geist said last week at Valley Preferred Cycling Center in Trexlertown.

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Geist remarkably got out of the hospital after just eight days, with the benchmark being the cessation of internal bleeding that was

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drained by a chest tube.

"I filled up some big boxes of blood," she remembered, "but once that stopped, I started getting better. All those fractures, I couldn't do anything about those."

Geist needed time to heal. She got out of the hospital three days before her fall semester was starting at [DeSales University](#) and only missed the first couple of days of classes.

The rest of her recovery took months and months. She was off the bike entirely from August through December and needed a walker to get around. [Physical therapy](#) with VSAS Orthopaedics in Allentown helped get her back.

Just 14 months after the accident, and even though unable to qualify for the [U.S. Olympic Team](#), Geist proved her mettle with a national championship performance in the individual pursuit.

Today, that Olympic dream is alive and well as Geist, a two-time bronze medalist in the individual pursuit at the UCI Junior World Championships, has re-established herself as one of the top women track endurance cyclists in the country.

"I'm racing," she said with a smile. "I'm working toward making the 2012 Olympic Team Pursuit, and I'm coaching full time, actually."

Geist is the name behind [KimGeist.com](#) coaching, and she took last Friday night off from racing at the velodrome to usher around some of her dozen-plus charges. She's got a dozen dedicated cyclists, along with a few masters-age riders, who are training for the USA Cycling Masters Nationals in Trexlertown July 26-31.

"I'm doing individualized programs and putting my schooling and experience to good use," said Geist, who graduated from DeSales

with a degree in Sports & Exercise.

Geist came to track cycling as a quiet 9-year-old, trying out the [Air Products](#) Developmental Program after one of her mom's former students recommended it for the neighborhood bike rider.

"I came out, gave it a try, and just went with it from there," Geist said.

Geist's best shot for the Olympic team in 2012 is as a member of the women's team pursuit.

"We have a base group of six right now," she said, "but the door is wide open if there is somebody who can come in and contribute and make the team even faster. We'll race throughout the winter. The first World Cup is in November, and it goes through April with the UCI World Championships, so we'll be judged on our World Cups, the championships, best performances, performances at camps, and it really comes down to times put in together as a team, and the coaches' discretion.

"I'm pretty excited," she said. "I've always pictured myself making an Olympic team, and this time I think there's really a chance for me to make it."

Giving back to the youngsters: One of the names that didn't get reported in the paper during the first three weeks of the World Series of Bicycling Friday night international professional racing series was that of California's Kit Karzen. Just one year removed from the junior level, Karzen is giving back to youth in a big way.

While last Friday was his last race in T-town before he headed home, his Kit Karzen Foundation offered cash prizes for junior riders during his final Tuesday night of racing.

"It's a very special thing to be able to help out the juniors and get them motivated for something instead of just chasing points," the 19-year-old Karzen said. "The dollar's always fun, too, so to give them a taste of that was as super special and pleasurable for me as it was for them."

The Kit Karzen Foundation (<http://kitkarzenfoundation.org>) was started this year to help kids overcome [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder](#) by using activity such as cycling as an alternative to traditional drug therapy. Karzen was diagnosed with ADHD as an 8-year-old, and opted out of the drug therapy at 13. He found cycling and went on to win four junior national titles while regaining focus.

"The Kit Karzen Foundation helps kids and teens with ADHD to use cycling as an active alternative to just medication," Karzen said. "We use active outlets and resources and programs that speak the 'get active first' mantra. It's great getting kids on bikes, and it's sponsored by the Specialized/First Gear Initiative."

Karzen was impressed with the eastern Pennsylvania cycling scene.

"Trexlertown is notoriously the center for track cycling in the U.S.," he said. "You've got people coming from across the pond all the time, and people coming from across the country. To come out here and race against the best and get that reassurance that track cycling is alive and well, it's a beautiful thing and I'm proud to have been here for three weeks. ... Maybe I'll come back for August."

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